



LOS ANGELES COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
BUREAU OF PROSECUTION SUPPORT OPERATIONS  
JUSTICE SYSTEM INTEGRITY DIVISION

GEORGE GASCÓN • District Attorney  
JOSEPH F. INIGUEZ • Chief of Staff

DIANA M. TERAN • Director

September 26, 2022

[REDACTED]  
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department  
Homicide Bureau  
1 Cupania Circle  
Monterey Park, California 91755

Re: Fatal Officer Involved Shooting of Raymundo Ceja  
J.S.I.D. File #20-0074  
L.A.S.D. File #020-03105-0600-013

Dear [REDACTED]

The Justice System Integrity Division of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office has completed its review of the March 1, 2020, fatal shooting of Raymundo Ceja by Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD) Deputy Tarek Salah. Our detailed analysis of this incident is contained in the attached memorandum.

Very truly yours,

GEORGE GASCÓN  
District Attorney

By

ALAN YOCHELSON  
Head Deputy District Attorney  
Justice System Integrity Division

c: Deputy Tarek Salah, # [REDACTED]

## **MEMORANDUM**

TO: [REDACTED]  
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department  
Homicide Bureau  
1 Cupania Circle  
Monterey Park, California 91755

FROM: JUSTICE SYSTEM INTEGRITY DIVISION  
Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

SUBJECT: Fatal Officer Involved Shooting of Raymundo Ceja  
J.S.I.D. File #20-0074  
L.A.S.D. File #020-03105-0600-013

DATE: September 26, 2022

The Justice System Integrity Division of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office has completed its review of the March 1, 2020, fatal shooting of Raymundo Ceja by Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) Deputy Tarek Salah. We have concluded that Deputy Salah acted in lawful self-defense and the defense of others.

The District Attorney's Command Center was notified of this shooting on March 1, 2020, at approximately 3:43 p.m. The District Attorney Response Team (DART) responded to the location, where they received a briefing and walk-through of the scene.

The following analysis is based on police reports, radio transmissions, LASD video surveillance, recorded interviews, crime scene photographs, ballistic reports, autopsy and toxicology reports, and other evidence submitted to this office by LASD Homicide Bureau Detectives Christopher Dimmitt and John O'Brien. Salah's voluntary statement was considered in this analysis. LASD deputies at the Santa Clarita Station were not equipped with body cameras when this incident occurred.

### **FACTUAL ANALYSIS**

On March 1, 2020, at 1:47 p.m., Raymundo Ceja parked a friend's Hyundai Sonata in the Santa Clarita Sheriff's Station public parking lot. Approximately forty minutes later, Ceja drove into the employee parking lot and parked in the northeast corner. At 2:29 p.m., Deputy Tarek Salah, who was wearing a full uniform, drove a marked, black-and-white patrol vehicle northbound in the employee parking lot towards the exit. [REDACTED] was accompanying Salah for a [REDACTED] and was seated in the front passenger seat. As Salah drove towards the exit, Ceja walked westbound in front of Salah's vehicle pointing what appeared to be a black, semiautomatic handgun directly at Salah. Salah exited the patrol vehicle, drew his duty weapon, and gave Ceja commands to drop the handgun. Several other deputies saw Ceja pointing what appeared to be a

handgun at Salah and gave Ceja commands to drop the weapon. Ceja stopped approximately ten feet in front of Salah and continued pointing the handgun directly at him. Salah told investigators that he believed Ceja was going to shoot and kill him. Salah fired two rounds from his duty weapon, striking Ceja twice. Ceja dropped the handgun and fell to the ground. Deputies approached Ceja and rendered medical aid. A replica Taurus airsoft pistol was recovered from the pavement next to Ceja. The Los Angeles County Fire Department (LAFD) transported Ceja to the Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital, where he was pronounced deceased at 3:05 p.m.



Replica pistol recovered from the scene.

██████ told investigators that as Salah was driving towards the exit, Ceja appeared on the front passenger side of the vehicle and continued walking laterally towards the driver's side while pointing a handgun directly at Salah. Salah stopped the vehicle and gave Ceja commands to drop the handgun. ██████ was concerned for his own safety, but said Ceja seemed focused on Salah. ██████ heard one gunshot before Ceja fell to the ground.

LASD video surveillance captured the incident and is consistent with the statements Salah and other witnesses made to investigators.

Investigators interviewed Ceja's family and friends. Ceja's ██████ told investigators a month before the incident, Ceja said he was "stressed," was hearing voices, and had tried to kill himself with a handgun. One of Ceja's ██████ told his ██████ that Ceja had been using narcotics and believed somebody was "after him." Ceja lost his job a month before the incident. ██████ told investigators Ceja had been staying at her apartment for a month. On the day of the incident, Ceja dropped ██████ off at her work in her Hyundai. Later that morning, Ceja sent ██████ a message saying he was not feeling well and was outside. When ██████ spoke to Ceja, he told her he was hearing voices. Ceja left after ██████ lunch break and arranged to pick her up at 3:00 p.m. At 2:00 p.m., Ceja sent ██████ a message saying he

loved her, everything was fine, and her Hyundai would be at the police station. [REDACTED] messaged Ceja but he did not respond. [REDACTED], Ceja's [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] of his [REDACTED] told investigators Ceja had been losing weight and was acting paranoid during the last month. On the day of the incident, Ceja sent [REDACTED] messages saying goodbye.

### Autopsy Report

On March 3, 2020, Los Angeles County Deputy Medical Examiner Zuhha Ashraf performed an autopsy and determined Ceja's cause of death to be gunshot wounds. Ceja suffered one gunshot wound to the midline upper chest that perforated his lung and one gunshot wound to the upper left thigh. The trajectory of both wounds was front to back, left to right and downward. Toxicology results indicated the presence of cocaine in Ceja's blood sample.

### **LEGAL ANALYSIS**

California law permits the use of deadly force in self-defense or in the defense of others if the person claiming the right of self-defense or the defense of others actually and reasonably believed that he or others were in imminent danger of great bodily injury or death. Penal Code section 197; *People v. Randle* (2005) 35 Cal.4<sup>th</sup> 987, 994 (overruled on another ground in *People v. Chun* (2009) 45 Cal.4<sup>th</sup> 1172, 1201); *People v. Humphrey* (1996) 13 Cal.4<sup>th</sup> 1073, 1082; *see also*, CALCRIM No. 505. The prosecution has the burden of proving beyond a reasonable doubt that a killing was not justified. CALCRIM Nos. 505, 507.

A peace officer is justified in using deadly force upon another person when the officer reasonably believes, based on the totality of the circumstances, that such force is necessary for either of the following reasons: (1) to defend against an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to the officer or to another person; or (2) to apprehend a fleeing person for any felony that threatened or resulted in death or serious bodily injury, if the officer reasonably believes that the person will cause death or serious bodily injury to another unless immediately apprehended. Penal Code section 835a(c)(1)(A) & (B).

A threat of death or serious bodily injury is imminent when, based on the totality of the circumstances, a reasonable officer in the same situation would believe a person has the present ability, opportunity, and apparent intent to immediately cause death or serious bodily injury to the peace officer or another person. An imminent harm is not merely a fear of future harm, no matter how great the fear and no matter how great the likelihood of the harm, but is one that, from appearances, must be instantly confronted and addressed. Penal Code section 835a(e)(2).

When considering the totality of the circumstances, all facts known to or perceived by the peace officer at the time, including the conduct of the officer and the subject leading up to the use of deadly force, are taken into consideration. Penal Code section 835a(a)(4) & (e)(3). The peace officer's decision to use force is not evaluated with the benefit of hindsight and shall account for occasions when officers may be forced to make quick judgments about using force. Penal Code section 835a(a)(4).

In evaluating whether a police officer's use of deadly force was reasonable in a specific situation, it is helpful to draw guidance from the objective standard of reasonableness adopted in civil actions alleging Fourth Amendment violations. "The 'reasonableness' of a particular use of force must be judged from the perspective of a reasonable officer on the scene, rather than with the 20/20 vision of hindsight... The calculus of reasonableness must embody allowance for the fact that police officers are often forced to make split-second judgments—in circumstances that are tense, uncertain, and rapidly evolving—about the amount of force that is necessary in a particular situation." *Graham v. Connor* (1989) 490 U.S. 386, 396-397.

Salah was driving through a crowded employee parking lot with a passenger when Ceja walked in front of his patrol vehicle pointing what Salah believed was a black, semiautomatic handgun in his direction. Salah and other deputies gave Ceja commands to drop the handgun. Ceja did not comply and continued pointing the handgun directly at Salah. Based on the totality of the circumstances, Salah reasonably believed the use of deadly force was necessary to defend against an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or death to Salah and others when he discharged his duty weapon. The fact that the handgun was later found to be an airsoft pistol does not alter the reasonableness of Salah's actions.

## **CONCLUSION**

We find that Deputy Tarek Salah acted in lawful self-defense and the defense of others when he fired his duty weapon.

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT  
INCIDENT REPORT

DATE 03-01-20 PAGE 1 OF 3

ACTION: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ACTIVE <input type="checkbox"/> INACTIVE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NON-CRIMINAL <input type="checkbox"/> PENDING	# OF ADULT ARRESTS 0	# OF SUBJECT DETENTIONS 0	URN# 0 20 03105	0600	013	TAG# 139
CLASSIFICATION 1 / LEVEL / STAT CODE ASSAULT WITH A DEADLY WEAPON ON A PEACE OFFICER 245(c)(1) PC/F/013				CLASSIFICATION 2 / LEVEL / STAT CODE			
CLASSIFICATION 3 / LEVEL / STAT CODE				CLASSIFICATION 4 / LEVEL / STAT CODE			
ADDITIONAL STAT CODES <input type="checkbox"/> ASAP / 83 <input type="checkbox"/> FIREARM RELATED / 830 <input type="checkbox"/> GANG RELATED / 860 <input type="checkbox"/> CYBER CRIME / 551				<input type="checkbox"/> CYBER - RELATED CRIME / 552 <input type="checkbox"/> CYBER - RELATED INCIDENT (NON - CRIMINAL) / 559 <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER			
DATE / TIME / DAY OF OCCURRENCE 03-01-20 / 1429 HR / SUNDAY				<input type="checkbox"/> PRINTS REQUESTED <input type="checkbox"/> PRINTS COMPLETED		REQUESTED BY: NIR	
LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE 27340 MAGIC MOUNTAIN PKWY. VALENCIA CA 91355				BUSINESS NAME SANTA CLARITA SHERIFF STATION			

CODE: V - VICTIM • W - WITNESS • I - INFORMANT • R - REPORTING PARTY • P - PARTY

CODE	#	of	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	MIDDLE NAME	SEX	RACE	DOB	AGE	DRIVER'S LICENSE / STATE ID
V	1	1	DEPUTY SALAH, TAREK			M	W			
RESIDENCE ADDRESS			CITY			STATE			ZIP	
LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF DEPARTMENT										
BUSINESS / SCHOOL (GRADE) ADDRESS			CITY			STATE			ZIP	
27340 MAGIC MOUNTAIN PKWY VALENCIA CA 91355									661-255-1121	
ETHNIC ORIGIN			EMAIL ADDRESS			SOCIAL NETWORKING ACCOUNT			CELL PHONE (Area Code)	
VICTIM OF OFFENSE(S) (CLASSIFICATION) #			VICTIM DESIROUS OF PROSECUTION?			VICTIM OF SEX CRIME DESIROUS OF CONFIDENTIALITY?			ENGLISH SPEAKING? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
# # # # #			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO			LANGUAGE	
CODE	#	of	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	MIDDLE NAME	SEX	RACE	DOB	AGE	DRIVER'S LICENSE / STATE ID
RESIDENCE ADDRESS			CITY			STATE			ZIP	
BUSINESS / SCHOOL (GRADE) ADDRESS			CITY			STATE			ZIP	
ETHNIC ORIGIN			EMAIL ADDRESS			SOCIAL NETWORKING ACCOUNT			CELL PHONE (Area Code)	
VICTIM OF OFFENSE(S) (CLASSIFICATION) #			VICTIM DESIROUS OF PROSECUTION?			VICTIM OF SEX CRIME DESIROUS OF CONFIDENTIALITY?			ENGLISH SPEAKING? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
# # # # #			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO			LANGUAGE	

CODE: S - SUSPECT • SJ - SUBJECT • M - PATIENT • SV - SUSPECT / VICTIM • SJ / V - SUBJECT / VICTIM

CODE	#	of	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	MIDDLE NAME	DOB	AGE	DRIVER'S LICENSE / STATE ID
S	1	1	CEJA	RAYMUNDO	AARON	06-28-87	32	
SEX	RACE	ETHNIC ORIGIN	HAIR	EYES	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	CELL PHONE (Area Code)	
M	H	-	BLK	BRN	600	200		
RESIDENCE ADDRESS			CITY			STATE		
BUSINESS / SCHOOL (GRADE) ADDRESS			CITY			STATE		
AKA			EMAIL ADDRESS			SOCIAL NETWORKING ACCOUNT		
MONIKER			CHARGE			BOOKING NUMBER		
CODE	#	of	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	MIDDLE NAME	DOB	AGE	DRIVER'S LICENSE / STATE ID
SEX	RACE	ETHNIC ORIGIN	HAIR	EYES	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	CELL PHONE (Area Code)	
RESIDENCE ADDRESS			CITY			STATE		
BUSINESS / SCHOOL (GRADE) ADDRESS			CITY			STATE		
AKA			EMAIL ADDRESS			SOCIAL NETWORKING ACCOUNT		
MONIKER			CHARGE			BOOKING NUMBER		

BY DEPUTY PINEDA, A	EMPLOYEE # [REDACTED]	SWORN EXP IN YRS 1	DEPUTY SANCHEZ, B.	EMPLOYEE # [REDACTED]	SWORN EXP IN YRS 12	VACATION DATES -
STATION SCT	UNIT / CAR # 660	SHIFT P	APPROVED SGT AARON JACOB	EMPLOYEE # [REDACTED]	DATE / TIME 3-02-20/0115	
PCD SUBMITTED? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	VACATION DATES -		ASSIGNMENT HOMICIDE			
HQ NOTIFICATION REQUESTED? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	DEPUTY	DATE / TIME	SPECIAL REQUEST DISTRIBUTION			
SUSPECT / SUBJECT FIELD RELEASE APPROVED BY	DATE / TIME	CRIME BROADCAST BY	LARCIS & SCANNED P. Dobrzanski Date: 3-2-2020			



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT  
INCIDENT REPORT**

A TRADITION OF SERVICE

URN# 020-03105-0600-013

TAG # 139

DATE 03-01-20 PAGE 2 OF 3

VEHICLE	LICENSE (STATE & NUMBER) [REDACTED] /CA	YEAR 2012	MAKE HYUNDAI	MODEL SONATA	BODY TYPE 4D	COLOR BLU
VEHICLE FOR VICTIM #	REGISTERED OWNER [REDACTED]	IDENTIFYING FEATURES				
VEHICLE FOR SUSPECT #		GARAGE NAME & PHONE WOLF TOWN 6601-259-7676				
<b>STATUS</b> <input type="checkbox"/> STOLEN <input type="checkbox"/> DAMAGED <input type="checkbox"/> EMBEZZLED <input type="checkbox"/> CHP 180 SUBMITTED? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STORED <input type="checkbox"/> IMPOUNDED <input type="checkbox"/> OUTSTANDING <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO						
DESCRIPTION OF DAMAGE						

  

VEHICLE	LICENSE (STATE & NUMBER)	YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	BODY TYPE	COLOR
VEHICLE FOR VICTIM #	REGISTERED OWNER	IDENTIFYING FEATURES				
VEHICLE FOR SUSPECT #		GARAGE NAME & PHONE				
<b>STATUS</b> <input type="checkbox"/> STOLEN <input type="checkbox"/> DAMAGED <input type="checkbox"/> EMBEZZLED <input type="checkbox"/> CHP 180 SUBMITTED? <input type="checkbox"/> STORED <input type="checkbox"/> IMPOUNDED <input type="checkbox"/> OUTSTANDING <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO						
DESCRIPTION OF DAMAGE						

**SCREENING FACTORS**

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. SUSPECT IN CUSTODY               | <input type="checkbox"/> 3. UNIQUE SUSPECT IDENTIFIERS | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. UNIQUE VEHICLE IDENTIFIERS |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2. SUSPECT NAMED / KNOWN | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. VEHICLE IN CUSTODY         | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. WRITER/REVIEWER DISCRETION |

**PROPERTY CODE:**

S - STOLEN • R - RECOVERED • L - LOST • F - FOUND • E - EMBEZZLED • D - DAMAGED • K - SAFEKEEPING  
 (Use all applicable Codes; for example, if property is both Stolen and Recovered, Code is S/R)

**RELEASED TO**

CODE	ITEM #	QUAN.	DESCRIPTION (Include kind of article, trade name, identifying numbers, physical description, material, color, condition, age and present market value)	SERIAL #	VALUE
------	--------	-------	--	----------	-------

SEE PAGE 3 FOR NARRATIVE

On the indicated date and time, the suspect pointed a firearm at the victim who was wearing his departmental uniform. The victim was driving a marked patrol vehicle. A Deputy involved shooting occurred. This occurred at the Santa Clarita Station employee parking lot. We responded to the Santa Clarita Station as Deputies requested assistance via their Los Angeles County issued radio.

Upon our arrival, I observed the suspect laying on the ground in the north end of the parking lot. He was bleeding from his torso area.

The suspect was transported to Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital (23845 McBean Pkwy.) by Los Angeles County Fire Engine 129, Captain Oldham.

Deputy Westerfield, S. (# [REDACTED]) and Deputy Boccanedes, J. (# [REDACTED]) escorted the suspect to Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital. See their supplemental report for further.

The suspect was pronounced deceased by Dr. Contreras at 1505 hours at Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital. At approximately 1519 hours, I contacted Los Angeles County Homicide Bureau and spoke with Security Officer Bolanos (# [REDACTED]) who issued Coroner Case number 2020-01868.

Los Angeles County Sheriff Arson and Explosives Detective Schulze, J. (# [REDACTED]) and Detective Valencia, C. (# [REDACTED]) arrived to the indicated location at approximately 1710 hours.

Los Angeles County Sheriff Crime Lab Specialist Marmolejo, M. (# [REDACTED]) arrived to the indicated location at approximately 1800 hours.

Homicide Bureau Detective Obrien, J. (# [REDACTED]) and assisting Homicide Bureau detectives arrived to the scene at approximately 1800 hours and took command of the investigation.